**Egg Nest Ramen**

Perhaps it is because I am feeling broody, like a hen with an empty nest. And certainly, I empathize with the egg, caged like a bird in its own home. It helps that my chickens started laying again, because what better way to celebrate a good egg? Whatever the exact reason, egg-in-a-nest is the official dish of my 2020 house arrest.

Most of us have had the standard breakfast version, where a piece of bread represents the nest. This can be a great meal, but as any robin will attest, many different materials can be in a nest. As long as there is an egg, the nature of the nest is negotiable. It must contain the egg while cooking, and tastefully to absorb the broken soft yolk at the table. An egg nest made of ramen noodles not only does the job, but looks the part.

Sure, you’ve added egg to ramen before. But there are levels to this game. Getting the egg right is the hardest part of cooking ramen, and it’s hard to monitor progress if you just drop it in, because the egg hides under the noodles at the bottom of the pot.

I like the egg cooked so the white is solid but the yolk is runny, but not broken.  If you want to cook it to the consistency of rubber, or stir it in because you broke the yolk, that’s your business. But if you want a picture perfect and satisfying Egg Nest Ramen to take away those broody blues, read on.

As far as I know, I’m the only one who poaches an egg on low atop a brick of ramen.  It steams above the broth for a moment, until the noodles cook enough to sink, along with the egg. Even then, the egg gets enough support from the noodles below to remain at broth level, so you can monitor progress.

When the egg is done to your liking, drain the broth and serve it in a cup, alongside the noodle-bound poached egg.

I make it sound easy, but the crux of this operation comes down to keeping that frisky raw egg on top of the raft noodles, because it wants desperately to slide off and take a swim — and will then overcook, or, if you try to fish it out, break.

As with any dish, the road to success begins with high-quality ingredients. With egg-in-a-nest ramen, that means choosing the correct package of highly processed noodles and flavorings. With a dizzying array of options online or at Asian supermarkets, it can be tough to know which to choose. My favorite is the Nongshim brand from South Korea. (A viable second is the venerable Japanese brand Sapporo Ichiban.)

Whatever package you choose, follow its printed directions while incorporating the tricks below. In short order you'll have a nest of woven noodles cradling a round, runny yolk.

**The Road to Ramen Righteousness**

In addition to the package of ramen, the only other ingredients you will need are the egg, obviously and perhaps some chopped herbs like parsley, cilantro or basil.

Pre-crack your egg into a little bowl. This allows you to add the egg one-handed, and eliminates the possibility of a broken yolk. Your other hand, meanwhile, uses a spatula to control the noodles, and keep the egg on top during the first few crucial moments.

Add the noodles, and turn the heat down to low. Then, with a flick of the wrist, invert the bowl so the egg slides into the middle, and let the bull ride begin. It never gets old.

As the egg lands, use the spatula to control the noodles, raising them in front of wherever the egg tries to run, pinning them against the side of the pot if necessary, and generally going to heroics to keep the egg on top. After a moment the noodles will sink, and the egg will solidify around the softening ramen and stop trying to escape.

As the egg approaches your preferred state of doneness, add the chopped herbs, if using, and turn off the heat. Cover the pot for a few minutes to steam the top of the egg, being careful not to overcook. When the egg is perfect, gently pour the broth into a cup. This allows the noodles and egg to stop cooking, while keeping the broth available for sipping.

Slide the noodles onto a plate with the quivering egg perched on top. Poke the yolk so the rich yellow cream anoints the noodles. At least I do. What you do with your egg, in your nest, is your business.